

Cardcaptors: Within the Realm

by Mysterious Voice Guy

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Summary: Sequel to CARDCAPTORS: A Bold New Realm. Catsby is back, and this time she's out for blood,... any way she can get it.

Cardcaptors: Within the Realm

Cardcaptors: Within the Realm

>Sequel to Cardcaptors: A Bold New Realm
Fanfic by Ryan Edgerton, creator of Team Revelation: The Saga

>
Chapter 1- A Little History

>
 A figure stood on the edge of a jagged, crumbling cliff, looking out at the dense jungle that lay below and the winding river that fed it like it was the jungle's bloodline. The sun was low upon the horizon, casting golden light and dark, black shadows upon every tree and overgrown plant in this dense maze of green hell. She had been imprisoned here for weeks, maybe months; she didn't know. All she knew was the burning hatred had been welling up in her for the whole time of her imprisonment, and every time she took a moment away from battling swarms of bloodsucking insects to think about the reason of her torment, a single image came to her mind. The warrior in the silver cloak who called himself Gabor of the Remnant. He was the cause of her pain.

> She knew the anger could make her stronger, if properly channeled. Some good things had come out of this banishment, but she couldn't wait for it to be over. For weeks and weeks she'd been traveling towards what she hoped was a city, a boat port, something she could use to arrange travel back to Tokyo, her home city. Actually, for all she knew she was just traveling towards a dot on a map she'd stolen, and who knows what that might actually be. Now she stood, miles away from her starting point and on the edge of civilization; she could just barely make out the curves of a roadway in the far-off distance, her vision aided by forces beyond her own comprehension. She had been alone this whole time, yet she had not. Necros, her teacher and a liaison to the great council of spirits. He never showed himself to her, simply spoke to her, spoke into her mind. He had made her into a hardened warrior.
 She would camp nearby for the night, making her

dwelling in a cave or such as she had many times recently, then awaken the next morning and prepare for the final day of her journey out of this torment. Once she reached civilization, she had big plans... very big plans...

>
 Necros stood in the silent darkness of the Abyss world, the realm to which the forces of darkness had been cast down to a long time, perhaps eons ago. Black fog was the regular weather in this world of shadow and darkness, a void empty of any real distinction of light and dark where everything was almost perfectly visible, if you ignore the effects of the fog, like as if darkness and light didn't even exist. Everything was, therefore nothing needed illumination in this realm of hatred and bigotry. Necros had, as best he could, a distinctly worried look on his face.

> Gabor. That kid had been a pain in his side since the moment he'd shown up on this scene, and now had nearly defeated his best shot at destroying the likes of him, Catsby. Almost doesn't count in spiritual warfare, though, and he had arranged things perfectly for Catsby's return to Tokyo so she could finish the job. But still, something had him deeply worried. What if Catsby wasn't enough? Was there any way he could boost her power that he hadn't already thought of? No, not a way in the world except taking direct control and doing the deed himself, and that held dangers all it's own. He needed a battle strategy that was quick, lethal, and utterly painful, like a sword. Like a flaming arrow.
 'Where,' he thought to himself. 'Is Gabor's weak spot. Everyone has one. For David it was Bathsheba, with Sampson it was his hair, with Judas it was simply money, and with Cain it was jealousy. Where can I attack Gabor that he cannot defend?'

> A plot came to him, a plot so utterly perfect it could not fail...

> Li sat alone in his room, thinking to himself. The past several weeks had been chaos, to say the least. Sakura had captured a few more Clow Cards, but most of what was going on had to do with that warrior Gabor. Gabor Gabor Gabor, everything lately seemed to be about Gabor. He had heard from Tomoyo that Sightings had even done an in-depth query on the guy,... which had gotten them not much farther than any other news station that had followed his 'super hero' routine since he'd showed up. The guy almost got on Li's nerves.
 As for Sakura, well, he had no idea what her thoughts on the topic were. They were both Cardcaptors, and even if he didn't want to admit it, so was Gabor. Although he'd never seen Gabor try to capture a Card, but then again maybe he didn't need to. Apparently he had his 'deck' well under control; Li wished he could say the same for Sakura and the Clow cards. Who knows how many were still left to be captured?

> He decided then and there to have a meeting with Sakura, find out exactly where she stood on all this.

> "OK, look, Li. I have to admit the guy's a wildcard, but I honestly don't think he's a threat." Sakura chastised over the phone. "If I didn't know better I'd say you're jealous of Gabor's powers."
 "And If I didn't know better I'd say you had a thing for this guy." Li retaliated.

> Kerberus rolled his eyes in utter frustration, then walked off to another part of the house where he hopefully couldn't hear the fighting and bickering.
 "Look, 'Mr. Clow', I don't know about you but I'm thankful for the fact that Gabor saved our lives."

> "He saved *your* life, Sakura. I could have taken down that storm myself if I had to, *and* saved you and Tomoyo."
 "Get real, Li. You've got an ego problem, buddy. Face it, you *are* jealous of him."

> "Jealous of the fact you've got a crush on him? Get real

Sakura."
 "I do *not* have a crush on him!" Sakura stated matter-of-factly.

> "Yeah, right. Sure you don't." Li was sarcastic. "I'm sure he's just some mysterious 'holy roller' who saved your life to you."
"Li, I am hanging up."

> She hung up the phone violently.

> "Well fine, be that way!" Li shouted, hanging up his own phone with a violent 'slam'.

>Chapter 2-The Foe

> Gabor stood vigilant, looking over the city as the sun set, deep sparkling golden on the horizon. In the colors of the sunset his cloak turned almost into a mirror, glowing with many of the same shades painted across the twilight sky and the small cluster of clouds out by the horizon. For anyone else, this would be a moment of peace, a time to relax. Not for him.
 He'd felt it, a deep, inexplicable feeling of evil that had been growing ever since he'd first defeated Necros's Darkcaptor almost a month ago. At first he thought it to be just his own nervous anxieties, but now he knew it was something more. He'd been experiencing an extreme loss of sleep, irritability, and confusion about so many things. He'd tried to locate the demonic forces behind this spiritual attack, but hadn't succeeded. Each time he tried to fight back the feelings faded away into the darkness, evading him, eluding him. He'd taken the issue to prayer, and afterwards he always felt stronger, but it wouldn't be long after that that the feelings and confusion and anxiety would come back, haunting him. By the Word he knew that a curse without a cause will not come to pass, but this one seemed like it was flittering around his head, unable to land but unwilling to give up its victim.

> 'She's coming back,' He thought to himself. 'Soon, very very soon, I'll have to confront her again. I can feel it. Every spiritual alarm system in me is going off like crazy.'
 And then there were the dreams... the nightmares that had been plaguing him for almost two weeks now. Sometimes it was her, sometimes it was a massive swarm of demons attacking him, but he knew that these were more than just dreams. These dreams were literal manifestations, either of the turmoil inside him, or the turmoil of the spiritual realm.

> What truly disturbed him was that some of his more normal dreams had also had the female Darkcaptor in them, and these dreams were ones he never expected to see her in. She was a nightmare, but...
 He broke from those thoughts with effort, gazing off at the setting sun, trying to find peace.

> She'd arrived secretly in the city two days ago, found an old warehouse she could hide out in, and 'set up camp'. She knew it was time to begin planning her attack, but she wasn't quite sure what way to go about it. She had access to a number of Cards that would likely do the trick; traps, warps, any number of various ways to put him at her mercy. But no, she'd need to do more than simply trap him or attack him... she needed a way to control him. She had looked through her 'deck', checking every Event Card for a way and every Creature Card for special powers she could use, but hadn't found anything that would effect him. Still, she knew he had weaknesses, and all she'd have to do to gain an edge was find a way to exploit them. What was his fatal flaw?...
 "He has several..." Necros's voice suddenly appeared inside her head, bouncing like as if it had reverb on it.

> "Such as?" Catsby inquired, leaning on a stack of boxes.
 "For one, the children, the ones who tried to assist him when you confronted him. If you control them, you control him."

> "A good idea,... but,... no. I need something else, a much more personal weakness..."
 "Attack him in his dreams, Catsby." Necros

proposed. "He cannot fight you, and you will eventually wear him out."

> "Hmm... now that's got a lot of potential. How?"
 A Card suddenly floated out of Catsy's pouch, as if held by an invisible hand, and hovered in front of her. She grasped it, looking it over as if seeing it for the first time. It was The Nightmare.

> "Nightmare has a special power... a power that allows whoever owns it to travel into people's dreams and attack them there. You can use Nightmare against the children as well, luring them here and using them as bait for Gabor. By the time he figures out your plan... it will be too late. He'll be too weak to fight and will be forced to trade his life for the lives of the children. Then... you'll have him."
 "Hook, line, and sinker..." Catsy mused.

>
 Gabor's dreams were turning sour and getting even worse each time he slept, and each day he felt more and more drained. But regardless of how tired he was, he still had a job to do each day.

> God had provided this apartment for him at nearly no cost, but even still he needed money for food and clothing. He worked a day job down at the police station, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise. He knew a few people down there, people who knew his secret, and had set things up so that if a true emergency came up he could don his Cardcaptor gear and be outta there like a flash. It paid good money, and kept him on his toes at the same time. Not only that, but it had turned out to be his personal 'ear and eye' on the city, an advantage which he seriously needed. He kept his cross with him at all times, just to be safe, but wore it underneath his uniform so that no one who didn't know would mistakenly identify him as 'The Silver Card Keeper'; a title given him by the media. There were times he knew how Clark Kent would've felt.
 This morning was turning out to be unusually busy, though. There'd been less crime since he'd come on the scene, but petty crimes were on the rise. This, however, was not a petty-crimes morning.

> "Gabor! Oh, I'm glad to see you." His partner, a guy by the name of Matt shouted as he rushed up to him moments after Gabor came in the door. "We've got a big problem, buddy. Bank robbery, just north of Cherrywood and Maple. Hostage situation, and they're armed to the teeth."
 "C'mon let's get going!" He said, the two of them rushing out front as more than a half dozen squad cars pulled out, lights flashing and sirens wailing. Matt grabbed his bulletproof vest out of the back of their squad car as Gabor got in the passenger's side of the car. A minute later, the two of them joined the line of squad cars rushing to the scene of the crime.

> They arrived on the scene and it was like arriving in a war zone. There were bullet holes in the doors to the bank, indications of a shootout in progress. Matt got out and reached for his handgun, while Gabor made his way unseen to a nearby alleyway. He pulled out his cross, while at the same time drawing out a white card from the pouch at his side. In the blink of an eye the card had transformed into his Cardcaptor outfit.
 Just another day on the job for 'The Silver Card Keeper'.

>
 Chapter 3- Siege

>
 Gabor's dreams got continually worse as time wore on, and each day he felt like he was waking up less and less alert and with less and less energy. In the meantime, Sakura and company were having nightmares of their own...

> "What do you mean 'she's a security risk'? She's my best friend!" Sakura protested.
 "Look, Li might have a point." Kerberus stated.

> "Who asked you?" Sakura retaliated. She turned to Li. "What do you

mean, 'she's a security risk'? I can't think of one good reason- "
 "Listen, Sakura, just chill out and listen for a minute!" Li shouted. The room went silent for a minute. "I know she's a good friend of yours and I know she's helped out in the past, but she's an open door for people to discover we're the mysterious Cardcaptors almost nobody believes exist. She's a social loudmouth, plus the fact that if somebody we don't know gets their hands on that video footage she's always taking and recognizes us, our whole cover is blown and they'll call in the military or something to hunt down and destroy the Clow Cards, and that's after they've dissected Kerberus."

> Kerberus gulped at the nerve-wracking thought.
 "OK, now you listen, Li." Sakura responded. "Tomoyo has been my friend for a very long time. I know her better than both of you and if you think she'd give us away, you're dead wrong. And as for somebody seeing the videos, she hides them away so well that not even her mom and dad know where she puts them. Nobody has ever seen those tapes outside of her, myself, and the occasional dust mite; our secret is safe with her. Why can't you believe that?"

> "I'm not even sure I'm comfortable with the fact that those tapes exist." Li retorted. "Besides, there's a million and one possible ways somebody could catch her watching those videos or find one of them laying around or something. I'm not gonna make any specific accusations, but I will say this: it's way too risky!"
 "It is not!" Sakura retorted. "She hides those tapes like as if her life depended on it."

> "In case you hadn't noticed, *all* of our lives depend on it. One, just one slip-up, and we might as well have big neon signs outside our houses that say 'meet the mysterious Cardcaptors'."

> As the two fought and squabbled amongst each other, evil of the most destructive nature was brewing just outside the city in an abandoned warehouse next to the docks. Unseen by human eyes, the cloud of evil darkness had descended upon the place days ago was now bursting outward, beginning to fill the city with a dense black fog that seemed to suck down light like a black hole. In reality, the cloud was a force from another realm, a realm of pure darkness. Hidden beneath the cloud, swarms of demons went about their business unopposed,... nearly. A few small lights still shone in and through this perpetual fog of concealing shadow, the light shone by the few in the city who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. Gabor was one of those, one whose light shone brightly,... even if not as strong as it had been before. It shone bright enough for Kai to locate him, at least.
 Gabor was getting ready to turn in for the day, having narrowly averted a rash of moderate to major crimes that seemed to have sprung up in the city suddenly, like when somebody opens a container of food only to find it consumed by mold. He had just started reading in Ephesians that night when Kai suddenly showed up.

> "Gabor, I have distressing news." The angel stated, appearing out of thin air. Gabor looked up at the sound of the angel's voice, then jumped off the small couch and spun to look at Kai. "I'm glad I was able to locate you with this fog consuming the city."
 Gabor looked out the window briefly before turning, perplexed, back to Kai.

> "Fog? Looks pretty clear out there to me."
 Kai shook his head, then directed Gabor's attention back outside.

> "Look again, son of Adam. The fog I'm speaking of is spiritual, not physical."
 Gabor looked carefully out the window for several moments before he began to see it. At first it was faint, like heavily dissipated car exhaust, then grew stronger by the second, until it was as strong and thick as if a cloud had descended on the

city. He blinked his eyes, just for a second, and it was all gone again, like as if the fog had never existed.

> "What is it? Some new kind of weapon Necros is throwing at us?"
"We believe so, but we cannot be entirely certain what it is. What we do know is the effect it's having. All over the city, people have been breaking into arguments, and as I'm sure you've noticed, crime is surprisingly high all of a sudden."

> "Sounds like an attack to me. Any chance this fog has something to do with these nightmares I've been having?"
"Not likely. At any rate, this fog has been having an effect on my forces as well."

Navigating in this fog has proved to be extremely difficult, and not only that, but several angels operating in this area have been ambushed in the last several hours alone. Most have been able to hold their ground fairly well, but this fog gives Necros and his forces all the cover they need to do whatever it is they're planning. Gabor, you need to track down the source of this fog and destroy it, else I fear the eventual results will not be good."

> "... What's the chances that this is connected to that female Darkcaptor I fought almost a month ago?"
"High." Was all that Kai could say in response.

> "This is not good..."

> Catsby had planned out her plot of revenge well, ever so well, and now the time was coming to take the next, almost final step to defeating Gabor. She gathered together a few of her key Cards, spreading them out on top of an empty box. She carefully selected two Cards, two Cards that would engage phase 2 of her plan. All she had to do now was draw the children...
 And then revenge would be within her reach.

>
 Sakura's dreams that night were characterized best by her arguments with Li, given dream form. She felt as if she was being pulled in a thousand different directions, half of them she wasn't even sure existed in the real world. Shadows without definite form pulled at her, clawed her face, and overall scared the living daylights out of the little girl. She suddenly felt like she was falling... screaming as she went... falling into a deep black abyss of nothingness that led nowhere...

> Suddenly, drastically, her dream changed so much that she almost jolted back awake with the unexpected, almost real images before her. Gone were the fearful shadows... gone was the swirling black nothingness that had pulled at her seconds ago... and in it's place... was a figure in a silver cape. She heard his voice clear and distinctive as day, like as if he was right next to her, whispering to her...
"Sakura... come to the abandoned warehouses by the dock... I'll meet you there..." The strong, almost seductive masculine voice instructed before vanishing off into a glowing white cloud that seemed to surround Sakura's present dream world.

> What Sakura didn't see was the scaly, almost Cyborg-like demon crouched at the foot of her bed, whispering gently to her. Necros seemed to grin, realizing his plan was going exactly as he'd hoped.
'I'll have Phalyn groveling at my feet before the week's end...' He thought to himself.

>
Chapter 4- Powers of Darkness

>
 Sakura flew to the docks, using her wand and her The Fly card to go airborne. She checked the place out from a birds-eye view before landing silently on the wooden planks of the dock. She scoped out the area, then one by one began investigating the old abandoned warehouses that lined the dock.

> It wasn't long before she bumped headfirst into Li.
"Li!" She shouted, surprised. "What are you doing here?"

> "Keep it down, Sakura." He whispered. "What the heck are you doing

here?"
 "I asked you first." She whispered.

> "Ok, just chill out..." Li replied. He paused for a long time, then turned back to Sakura. "I had... a freaky dream. You were,... in the dream, of course,... telling me to come here. What about you?"
 "I had a dream too..." She stated, nervous about what she should and shouldn't tell Li. He looked at her with a probing eye. "... Only it was Gabor who told me to come here."

> "Knew she had a crush." He mumbled under his breath.
 "Do not!" She retorted

> "Duh! You obviously do!"
 "And what about you? I was in your dream; do you have a crush on me?" She prodded.

> "No way!" He seemed cut to the quick. A blush crept up his cheeks. "Ok, look Sakura. There's obviously something weird going on here, and we need to find out what it is. Let's just forget about this whole crushes thing and get to the bottom of this."
 "Fine by me." She stated. In her mind, though, she couldn't help but wonder if he didn't have a crush on her.

> She shrugged it off as best she could, and she and Li set about the task of,... well,... getting to the bottom of this mystery. It wasn't be long, though, before the answer found them.
 "Aw, look at the two little kiddies playing detective in the dark." Catsby's voice rang out amongst the empty old building. Sakura and Li immediately stiffened, getting into battle stances in anticipation of their unseen enemy. Li drew his sword while Sakura grabbed a Card and readied her wand to use it.

> "Who are you?" Li shouted into the darkness.
 "Whoever you are, we're ready for you." Sakura stated, using her best attempted-bravery voice.

> "Ha! You, ready to take on someone such as myself? I don't think so." The voice replied, and a flutter of movement was heard somewhere in the old building.
 "Sakura, get ready." Li instructed. He was tense, his sword held boldly in a battle posture just in front of him. "I recognize that voice."

> "Who?" Sakura inquired, but Li put up a hand to quiet her.
 Suddenly, a shadowed form leapt down from the rafters, appearing straight out of the darkness that consumed the room. It landed right in front of them, and as the figure threw wide her cloak Li and Sakura got their first good look at Catsby. Another shadow leapt into visibility on the other side of the room, then another and another. Sakura's breaths came in short, frightened gasps as the unidentified figures approached them, sealing off any possible route of escape.

>
 Gabor had donned his cloak and cross and was out, searching. For exactly what, he didn't know, but whatever he hoped to find he knew it wouldn't be good. Flipping from rooftop to rooftop, he formed into a nearly invisible blur against the darkened city as he searched for an evil he knew not where. He had only a few things to guide him: his instincts, his eyes, and the Holy Spirit.

> Suddenly, a shadow darted out in front of him. A split second later he realized this was no ordinary shadow; this shadow was alive. He swiftly grabbed a Card from his pouch and called it into action.
 Shine materialized instantly, and as if it were of one mind with Gabor it spun to wrap the winged shadow in its glowing white, not-quite solid mass. The shadow screamed in surprise as it felt itself get wrapped up in the creatures strange cloth-like body. It struggled, thrashing violently against Shine's attack, but that eventually proved useless. Shine dragged the winged shadow down to the roof where Gabor stood.

> "Ok, demon scum, listen up!" He grabbed the creature's small mass of erratic hair, pulling on it painfully. The creature snarled in

frustration and hatred, but could not escape. "I want some answers and I want them now!"

> Sakura's Cards struggled violently against Catsby's, as did Li and his, but were slowly losing ground. Catsby had laid open a wound on Li's arm, forcing him out of any sword combat he could have hoped to have been victorious in, and Sakura now stood at his side, face to face with the witch herself. Over in a corner, she heard Windy go down with a sharp squeal as Predator bashed it for everything it had with the mace in its hand. Nightmare had proven to be one of Catsby's most powerful cards of all, having defeated both Sakura's Shadow and Thunder Cards, and was presently in a battle with Fly. Catsby had so many creature cards it seemed to daunt Sakura's best attempts to defeat them.
 "Ready to give up before I have to run you and your boyfriend through?" Catsby inquired, a black Card in her hand.

> "Never!" Li shouted, holding his bleeding arm in pain. Blood flowed through his fingers as he struggled to stand. "Don't give into her, Sakura!"

> Gabor moved faster than he'd ever moved before, dashing across rooftops on his way to the abandoned warehouse district next to the dock. Thanks to that off-guard demon he'd run across, he knew all about what Necros was up to. Not that that made him any more prepared to deal with it, but at least he now had a semi-idea what it was he wasn't prepared to deal with.
 A sudden yawn overtook him, evidence that he was not in the best of conditions to engage a deadly enemy in a life-or-death fight. He drew to the Holy Sprit for strength, and soon he *was* feeling more fighting fit. He sped up, the docks within sight.

> "Better not go in there unprepared." He stated, pulling out a pair of creature Cards. A flash of light lit up the night sky as they came to life, and when it faded away, Valconair and Shine stood ready at his sides. "C'mon, follow me." He instructed, the two strange creatures taking his lead and following him into the upcoming battle.

> "Here he comes..." Catsby mused to herself. "Looks like it's show time. Jolt, get ready to ambush him along with Venom and Blacklight. We'll show him who's the real master-captor in this city."
 Just behind her, bound by tough ropes, sat Sakura and Li, gagged and handcuffed as well, just to make sure. Catsby obviously wasn't taking any chances with her prize catch, and the swarm of Darkcaptor creatures guarding the kids proved it. Jolt flew off into the darkness, followed by what looked like a female tar pit and a purple version of either The Shadow or The Shine, with two glowing blue eyes peering out from beneath the hood of its ghost-like form. Catsby had noticed that to be a recurring theme in many Cards, possibly because the Cardcaptors of old had had a thing for just such a design. Catsby saw that Blacklight and its breed of Cards were all very powerful, not to mention the very form of them struck fear into the hearts of both friend and foe alike, adding to the powerful effect. Flarewolf, Nightmare, Vicegrip, Threshold, Deathstrike, its inverted look-alike Deathblow, Predator, and one of her favorites, The Swarm, stayed with her to help watch the Sakura and Li, and prepare in the event that Gabor's forces defeated her ambush team. Which was unlikely, she thought to herself, since she'd chosen the three perfect Cards with which to take out Gabor's Valconair and Shine. This would shape up to be quite a fight, not to mention one she couldn't lose. She let out a small, evil laugh.

>
Chapter 5- Catsby Takes Action

>
 "Stay close by me." Gabor instructed his in-play Cards. "Who knows what that Darkcaptor has planned or what she's packing this time."

> Valconair and Shine nodded. The small strike team silently snuck into the abandoned warehouse the demon had indicated to before Gabor had thrown it off into the night. Shine turned it's glow down as much as it could, making it significantly harder to see where any of them were going, but the trio continued at it anyway.
 Suddenly, Gabor heard something. Something remarkably like the crackling of electricity. He turned to track the source and noticed another receded glow over in one of the nearby corners, a glow that, like Shine's, looked very much like it was trying to hide itself. Gabor suddenly heard the faint electric crackle yet again, and instantly recognized it. He pulled out a Card in a heartbeat and threw it through the air towards the direction of the glow.

> It was the activation word in Hebrew that alerted his attackers to him being onto them, but that was only a second or two in between when the blast of razor-like wind hit them. Venom and Blacklight went flying backwards, their very form being at disadvantages against the hurricane-like strike. Jolt, nearly immune to the attack, shot into action on the moment, but was caught off guard by a whip-like strike from Shine all the way across the room. Venom and Blacklight quickly rebounded from the whirlwind attack, floating and sloshing across the battlefield with a rage filled intensity. Gabor reached for his cross, but in the same thought he realized his sword wouldn't do very much damage to these three foes. Instead he reached for another Card, one that would likely give him the upper edge instead of them.
 The three-element hailstone exploded on contact with the three assailants, doing a good deal of damage to each based upon their elements. Jolt was struck particularly hard by the stone and ice that went flying into it's cloud body, the stone tearing away it's electrical charge and draining the thundercloud of it's energy like as if it had been hit with a magnet. Venom's sludge body instantly caught on fire from the flaming missile, sending it instantly back into it's Card, which likewise burnt into nothing but ashes as the flames devoured it. As for Blacklight, the pure force of the blow and the explosion it caused was enough to send the Cardcreature into a huge pile of boxes, where it lay, apparently dazed.

> "Valconair! Shine! Attack them with everything you've got!" Gabor instructed. The predatory bird swooped and slashed at Blacklight with it's wings, glowing white energy surrounding it's body, while at the same time Shine enveloped and constrained it's opponent with it's rubbercloth-like body, bashing the ball of energy and draining it for everything it had. Within minutes, it was all over, Blacklight and Jolt returned to their Card forms. The flames slowly consumed them, turning their black surface into nothing more than powder.

> "Where are you, witch!?" Gabor shouted out, no longer caring if he was heard or not. By now ...she... probably knew about the battle's turnout, and she would likely be rallying her remaining Cards for an attack. "Show yourself!"
 For several minutes, there was nothing but silence. Gabor activated his cross-sword with a brilliant flash of light, and when the flash faded out of his eyes, the woman Darkcaptor stood before him.

> "My, my," She scolded, like he was a little child. "Aren't we demanding today? I'll teach you your place soon enough."
 Gabor wasted no time on talk, and in less than the blink of an eye he suddenly held a fistful of Cards. Without giving her the slightest second to react, he threw them into play, activating them with a shout in Hebrew. The various glowing attacks passed right through her form and exploded into flames against the boxes behind her. He looked on, stunned, as she walked right up to him and looked him in the eye with a glare of superiority.

> "Hologram Card, came with my 'deck'."She explained. "If I wanted to

destroy you, do you actually think I'd give you a chance to get the upper hand?"
 "Take a good look at those." He pointed towards the destroyed remains of the Cards she'd tried to ambush him with.

"That's what I'll have to do to you if you don't stop this attack immediately."

> "Really?" She questioned, an almost seductive smile on her face. "You really believe you could bring yourself to destroy something of such beauty? If that had been the case, you would have destroyed be the first time we fought. But you didn't, did you? Oh I know all about your 'Random Card', and that's not what I'm talking about at all." She got right up in his face, only inches between himself and the holographic image.
 "What do you think you're talking about?" He backed away, not so much out of fear but to keep from being drawn in by her advances.

> "You know exactly what I'm talking about, Gabor. I know all about you, and I know that if you had truly intended to destroy me all you had to do was ambush me in the first place and I would be dead now, wouldn't I?"
 "I... I didn't want anybody to die unnecessarily."

> "That included me, didn't it?" She approached him again, her words playing with his mind, tugging at his emotions and assaulting his reasonable thinking. "Isn't that statement exactly contradictory to what you said you wanted to do to me? That you would destroy me? No, we both know you wouldn't, couldn't bring yourself to do that. I know all about your dreams as well, Gabor. Catsby, my name is Catsby."
 He'd been wondering her name for a long time, and the fact that he now held his answer almost got his guard down. What was wrong with him!? This demonic emissary who had tried to carve him up only a month ago was now playing him like a puppet!

> "I know we kinda,... got off on the wrong foot, Gabor." She said, casualty mixing in with her soft, seductive voice. "If I had known how strongly you felt for me, I would never-"
But he didn't even hear the rest of her sentence. Something, he had no idea what, but something had suddenly shifted his spiritual senses into overdrive, going from zero to one-billion in less than 5 seconds. Like a phantom puppeteer, he suddenly saw Necros just behind her, whispering the very words she was saying into her ear. The demon commander who had been invisible mere seconds ago now stood before him and behind her, and suddenly Gabor's mind was one-hundred percent clear of the confusion Catsby had been feeding him. Without even a second's reaction time he leveled an uppercut at the Raptor-like humanoid, his hand passing straight through the startled image of Catsby and sending Necros flying into/through a plie of boxes.

> "What the (censored) was that?!!" She demanded of him, having no idea about Necros's control.
 "Sorry, Catsby, but I'm no puppet and now I know who the real puppeteer in this little game is again. Nice attempt; you really had me going there for a while, but I'm no fool. Necros is behind this, isn't he?" He demanded back.

> Catsby looked as if someone had detonated an atomic bomb next to her left ear.
 "W-w-w-what?!! How... how could you possibly...?" She sputtered.

> "Let me let you in on a little something, Catsby." Gabor stated, walking straight through her. She spun to watch as he left, his Cardcreatures following close behind him. "He's not just behind this whole attack, but a second ago he was behind you."
 She almost simply stood there, shell shocked, as he left to go deeper into the warehouse, but managed to break out of her frozen expression and reappear in front of him.

> "You're not the *idiot* I took you for, Gabor. I don't know how you even know who Necros *is*, but I can see one thing very clearly in

your future, 'Mr Remnant Cardcaptor': death. Yours."
 "Get out of my way." He passed through her yet again.

> "You should have stopped while you were ahead, Gabor. You could have had *me*, had *real* power; together we could have *ruled* this world. You threw it all away, fool, and since all that means *nothing* to you," She was on the verge of screaming right now as Gabor continued to ignore her. "You will pay the ultimate price,... you *and* the Cardcaptor brats." Her tone calmed more as she mentioned Li and Sakura. Gabor turned to face her at their mention. "If you will not surrender to me, know this full well Gabor: they will die."
 Chapter 6- When Darkness Falls

>
 Kai stood on a high hill overlooking the city, and what he saw was not good in the least. The cloud of black fog continued to spread out and get thicker, hiding everything in the city. Next to him stood some of his mightiest ArchAngels; Cameron, Seti, and Dareus. The four angels looked out upon the bleak condition of the city, knowing full-well that it was mostly in God's hands from here on in. It was up to Gabor to defeat Catsby, destroy the source of this black cloud, and rescue the children. In the end, it was all in the Lord's hands, but whatever decisions Gabor would make could change a good many things.

> "Must we sit here and do nothing?" Cameron inquired.
 "This time," Kai replied. "It is not yet our time to fight."

>
 "Catsby..." Necros's voice came to her once again. She stopped in mid stride, listening carefully. "... Gabor is on his way here. It's time for a change in plans, Catsby."

> "Change? Such as?"
 Suddenly, a black energy doorway formed behind her.

> "I have prepared a place for you, a special battleground that will put Gabor at your mercy. All you need to do is get him to go through this doorway and he will be fighting on your 'turf', as humans put it, and by your rules." Necros explained. "The place I have prepared for you has a special energy field all around it that will increase your power, and inhibit his. He will become easy prey..."
 "Necros, you are a genius." She smiled.

> Sakura and Li starred at her, bewildered looks on their faces. 'Who is she talking to?' Sakura wondered. She could see Li was wondering the same thing.
 Catsby turned to look at them.

> "C'mon, kids. Hope ya like to travel, cuz' we're taking a trip." She motioned to Vicegrip, and the giant Hercules-beetle pushed Sakura and Li into the glowing dark doorway. They vanished like they'd been caught by a black hole, and Vicegrip vanished along with them. Catsby motioned to the rest of her forces to follow them through, and one by one the Cardcreatures entered the doorway and disappeared. She herself waited, though. She had something special in mind for Gabor...

> It wasn't long before Gabor located Catsby. He hid amongst the shadows as best he could, Valconair and Shine having been returned to their Cards. He knew she could sense he was close by, just as he himself had known she was close as well before even seeing her. She looked like she was waiting for something,... maybe more like she was waiting for some*one*. He had to be alert, ready at a moments notice to strike if he had to. His sword ready, he suddenly leapt out of the darkness and-
 The feel of a fresh wound in his leg made him cringe and fall back. He examined the injury, discovering he'd had what looked like a slash mark open into his leg. He turned around and saw a small dagger, right side of it's blade lined with blood, stuck out of the wall just behind him. She could easily have almost severed his leg, but somehow had either missed or aimed off. His cloak also had a hole in it from where the dagger had gone through, and he

painfully realized she'd known he was in those shadows the whole time. He tore off part of his cloak and began bandaging his wound as quickly as he could as she walked up to him.

> "Clever, Gabor, very clever indeed. Useless, however." She pointed towards the amulet around her neck. "An amulet of Detect Opponent, effective to a range of up to 100 meters when I focus hard enough. I almost didn't detect you, but your sword gave you away."
 "Why are you playing games with me, Catsby? I already said I would never join you, and I'll do what I have to do to protect those children and this world from you." He retaliated, completing the temporary bandage. "So what's your angle this time?"

> "I decided you deserved a second chance, Gabor. Don't answer now, but know that my offer still stands." She backed slowly into the black gateway, seeming to eye Gabor, trying to read him. "All it takes is one little word and the children go free. I don't have to kill anyone to get what I want, all I need is you at my side and the leaders of this world will be subject to anything we say. Imagine, Gabor, a person such as yourself in control of the whole world; imagine the change you could implement; the souls you could save..."
 "You speak with the tongue of a serpent, Catsby. Right and wrong are not interchangeable and what good is change if it isn't a change in the heart." He replied, standing to his feet.

> "Like I said before, don't answer now. Think it over..." And with those words she vanished, her body reacting to the gateway like sand pulled by the wind.
 Gabor followed her, knowing she would not get far...

>
 An ancient castle, Ireland...

>
 Gabor fell out of the doorway and hit the ancient stone floor like he'd been hit by a bus. After a few minutes of his head spinning in a dazed fury, he managed to break through the nausea and stand to his feet. 'Where was this place?' He wondered to himself as his head slowly cleared. '*What*' was this place? Lit torches lined the hallway ahead of him and in the dim light he saw a shadowed figure dash off down the halls. He almost decided to give chase when another wave of cranium-pounding nausea hit him like a bomb. He fell to his knees, trying desperately to get his second wind and get this crippling, draining feeling out of his head. After a minute or two he began to get his senses back as he slowly gained ground against the frustrating feeling.

> He stood up again, this time able to stand without the massive waves of nausea overpowering him, and looked around. This place was most definitely a castle of sorts. Greybrown stone formed the building all about him and torches lit the way along the somewhat narrow corridors. Catsby was nowhere to be seen, and he had an uneasy feeling about this whole place. Even the torches seemed to have a darkness about them that he couldn't quite put his finger on. He picked up his sword, which he had dropped in his fall out of the gateway, and turned to see that the black doorway had vanished from existence.

> He was on Catsby's turf now, and if he wasn't careful, he'd be dead on her turf soon enough.

> Chapter 7- Castle Fury

> An hour later...

> Gabor had been dodging traps for what seemed like hours, trying desperately to find his way to Sakura and Li. Trip wires and pressure-sensitive floor tiles were all over this castle, and he'd encountered many more than his fair share of arrows shooting at him, hidden pitfalls, walls that closed in on him, and all other kinds of medieval madness. He couldn't keep this up much longer. He'd gotten an arrow in his left arm when he'd triggered one of the castle's

hundreds of traps, and with the leg wound Catsby had inflicted on him he now stood about zero chance of facing her one-on-one. Out of breath, he collapsed to the floor and just lay there, praying, for minutes on end. His only chance was if Kai and the others could reach him somehow with reinforcements.
 He reached into his pouch and pulled out his very last medical Item Card. Putting it into play unveiled a vile of medicine, and he gladly applied the stinging liquid to the wound in his arm and a few other minor scrapes and bruises he'd received. Catsby was serious about this whole 'join me or die' deal, and if these traps were any indication, she had more than enough muscle to back that offer of hers up. Obviously, though, either she'd been planning on this castle for a very long time, or Necros and his dirtbags had set up these traps. Figures. It wasn't bad enough he had to fight a supervillainess Darkcaptor who thought he had a thing for her, but now he had to deal with arrows, falling ceiling blocks, trapdoors, spiked pits, spiked everything, flaming arrows, moving walls, a few scattered flamethrowers, and he wouldn't be surprised if he ran across the kitchen sink soon. He'd be a liar if he said all this wasn't taking it's toll on him, and unless a miracle happened, he had exactly zero chance of defeating Catsby.

> "Why!" He screamed out in frustration. "WHY!!!"
 "... Simple..." A voice responded. It didn't take him more than seconds to locate the source. Catsby. "... All of this is happening because of you."

> "Save your pep talk, Catsby. Torture me all you will, kill me if you can, but I will never join you." He responded, struggling to get his feet but getting nowhere. She walked over and took his chin in her hand, the very action of skin meeting what he had presumed to be a hologram startling him.
 She looked at him for a second, searching his eyes, perhaps in some way trying to read his thoughts, then released him and walked away, vanishing into the hallways. He heard the sound of a teleport Card activate, and saw Catsby's shadowed form vanish from view. The communication had been silent, unspoken, but the exchange had occurred. Gabor got to his feet after a small struggle, and after a few forced deep breaths he continued on, more determined than ever.

>
 Catsby rematerialized in the castle courtyard, her usual non-emotional expression on her face. Sakura and Li were tied now to a tree in the center of the courtyard, Flarewolf guarding them, glaring at the two of them hungrily. Sakura and Li thrashed about, but were unable to loose the ropes binding them. Catsby turned to Deathblow and Deathstrike, two of her more formidable Cards.

> "Deathstrike! Deathblow! I've got an assignment for you two."
 The Cardcreatures walked over to her, responding immediately to their owner's call. They looked almost human, with the exceptions being the color of their skin and the weapons that replaced their hands, of which they each had four. Deathstrike bore a quad-pair of Arabian-style swords that had an S curved formation attached to it's golden, reptile-like skin, whereas Deathblow's weapons were mace heads instead of swords and it's green skin almost seemed to reflect the light.

> "Yes, Darkmaster. What is your bidding?" They replied in sync with each other, their snake-like voices causing Sakura's skin to crawl.
 "Go, find Gabor. Finish him off, and leave no room for failure. If you have not succeeded when you come back, the consequences will be dire."

> "Yes, great Darkmaster. We shall not fail."

> Gabor hoped he was past the booby-trapped hallways by now, now that he was in this wide-open chamber. He didn't exactly know what this room was, but based upon the circle shape and the ancient writings he couldn't identify, he knew it wasn't a good place. Whatever this

place was, he figured it was as good a place as any to rest up.
 He checked his Cards, trying to decide what strategy he should use when he finally had to face Catsby. It was a tough decision, not in that he had too many options to choose from, but in that he really didn't have any options to choose from. She had the advantage in every way, shape, and form he could imagine and he had absolutely no idea how he would counter her. He really had only one option, the same option he'd had the last time he'd faced Catsby.

> The Random Card.
 Of course, he'd have to rescue Li and Sakura first. He couldn't risk them being anywhere nearby when that Card went off. Even so, he couldn't expect the Random Card to automatically act like an A-Bomb. He wouldn't be surprised if it was capable of simply turning into an apple or a fish or something. He'd need a backup plan, and right about now he had no ideas for backup plans.

> His thoughts were interrupted as a bloodcurdling scream pierced the ancient silence of the room.
 He spun to face his attackers, bringing his sword to bear and back-flipping to a ledge on the wall for protection. He spotted Deathblow and Deathstrike the moment they burst through a nearby wall, flooding the room with smoke. He feared they'd bring this whole place down on him, until he realized that what he'd mistaken for broken wall was actually a secret door, and the smoke was coming from *within* the passageway, which was probably blanketed with layers upon layers of dust. Deathblow screamed yet again as it aimed one of its four fists at Gabor, the spikes of the mace heads shooting off like small missiles at him. He dodged the deadly storm with a leap downward, only to be caught almost by surprise when Deathstrike took aim at him, two of its sword-fists stretching out in front of it like the creature's arms were made of rubber, striking the wall like a battering ram. He dodged with a quick roll to the side, whipping out a two Cards of his own.

> "Time to die, boy!" Deathblow shouted at him, aiming one of its deadly fists at him while the other reloaded.
 "I think not." He threw the two Cards into play. The first one materialized into a giant locust with forearms like a mantis and a tail like a scorpion, and the second was a humanoid flower creature, female, and its body was surrounded in protective flames. Deathstrike and Deathblow took one look at their opponents and brought their weapons to bear on them, each keeping an eye on Gabor at the same time. "Plague, Sign! Attack!"

> The battle erupted into fierce combat in seconds. Deathblow and Deathstrike were viciously attacking, but so were The Plague and The Sign. Deathblow struck out with its spikes shooting across the field of battle, but was quickly countered as Sign turned its flame shield up full blast, melting the small metal spikes while at the same time repelling them. Deathstrike blocked a swipe from Plague's scorpion tail with one of her swords, then took aim with another to slice Plague's head off. Plague countered with its scythe-like forearms, then sent Deathstrike flying with a sudden unexpected kick. But these two Cards would not be so easily defeated. Deathstrike quickly rebounded from the kick, aiming a kick of its own at Plague, who dodged with a sudden dash into the air. Its wings held it aloft as it aimed small blasts of dark red poison sludge at its opponent, which Deathstrike managed to dodge with some effort. Sign attacked Deathblow, creating a swarm of flaming leaves that it shot in clusters at Deathblow. The creature retorted, smashing each cluster of leaves to the ground with its mace-head hands.
 Gabor's intervention quickly turned the tide of battle, though, as he sent Deathblow flying with an airborne missile kick. The creature smashed against the wall, small chunks of rock coming loose from above and

bouncing off the ground around where Deathblow now lay, phased for the moment. Deathstrike heard it's teammate's body hit the cold stone and turned it's attention away from Plague, for just a moment in time. That moment was enough. Plague and Sign assaulted Deathstrike with a barrage of attacks, fire and acid mixing together as they hit the creature, erupting into flaming blobs. Deathstrike was forced back, and with a flash of darkness it returned to it's Card form, screaming in rage. Gabor's forces quickly turned their attention on Deathblow, but discovered that the creature was nowhere to be found. The secret door that they'd come through was now suddenly closed.

> Gabor nodded to Plague, who easily cut away the false stone guarding the passage. Dust flew up all around him as Gabor lunged headfirst down the passageway, Plague and Sign just behind him. He, for a split second, saw a shadowed form dash around a corner in the part of the passage ahead of him, and he nodded to Sign in silent communication. The fire plant creature aimed a single flaming leaf at the part of the hall nearest to the turn, and in split seconds the dust nearest that area exploded into a raging inferno. Gabor quickly pulled out an Event Card, putting a wall of wind in-between them and the burning wildfire that repelled the flames seconds before they would have reached the bold trio. He heard a horrified scream from somewhere in the passageway, followed by the sound of a Card returning to it's normal form.
"That's one more Card Catsby won't be able to use ever again." He thought out loud.

>
Chapter 8- Confrontation

>
 She paced from one end of the courtyard to another. What was taking Deathstrike and Deathblow so long? It was almost daybreak and the team she'd sent out to attack Gabor hadn't returned yet. That could mean one of two things: he was hiding, or Gabor had destroyed them both. Either way, that wasn't good. Catsby glanced over at Li and Sakura, still bound to a tree and both having fallen into a light, fitful sleep. He wouldn't be hiding forever, and she knew it. Sooner or later he'd confront her, either to surrender or to try and rescue them, and if he was stupid enough to stand and fight she knew she'd be ready for him.

> Another possibility had occurred to her, that perhaps Gabor had been killed in one of the traps Necros had told her about, and that the reason Deathstrike and Deathblow hadn't returned yet was because his corpse was at the bottom of a pit somewhere unseen or something of that manner. However, she knew that that wasn't the case. Had he been killed Necros would have known and he would have told her so, giving her her reward of becoming one with the universal mind in all it's greatness. That hadn't happened yet, so she knew he must still be alive.
Suddenly, a streak of white shot across the courtyard, passing straight through Predator like a super powerful laser beam. She spun just in time to hear the Minotaur scream in pain as it suddenly began to resume it's Card form. Catsby heard the flutter of wings on the other side of the courtyard and spun yet again to see Valconair slowly materialize out of the glowing beam of light, white energy still shining like the sun from it's wings and illuminating the whole courtyard.

> "You shouldn't have returned, Catsby." Gabor's voice echoed into the courtyard. Catsby slowly turned to locate Gabor high up on the wall of the castle, his cloak billowing lightly in the morning's winds. The sun was beginning to peak over the horizon just behind him, casting a golden glow over his mysterious form. He pulled a black Card from behind his cape and threw it to the ground at her feet with razor-sharp accuracy. The Card thudded into the ground.
"Well 'Hello' to you, too." Catsby stated. "Miss me?"
> "Listen up, Catsby, and listen good." Gabor challenged. "I will

never join you, nor will I ever fight for the forces of Godlessness and evil. I order you, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the King of Glory, to surrender immediately!"
 "You, order me? Ha! That's a laugh!" She replied, motioning to Flarewolf. "I think you've got the order reversed, Gabor, because if you don't surrender to me unconditionally right now, I'll turn these brats into kindling. Ya got that?"

> "I think you overestimate yourself, Catsby."
 Suddenly, Gabor's full force of Cardcreatures broke through the walls of the courtyard, sending smoke and debris flying. Valconair swiftly sent Flarewolf flying as it plowed into the beast, and in the same train of thought turned and slashed off the ropes around Li and Sakura. The two Cardcaptors fell to the ground, rushing off to where Catsby had put their weapons and Cards without a second thought.

> "Oh no you don't!" Catsby pulled a Card from a pocket within her cloak, but was stopped mid throw as Gabor appeared in front of her. Their swords clashed in a series of quick swipes as Gabor struggled to defeat Catsby any way he could. Behind them, their Cardcreatures collided in a cloud of furious battle, flames, lightning bolts, and all other kinds of attacks flying from both sides. Sakura and Li suddenly joined the fight, having rescued their Cards and weapons. Gabor quickly back flipped over to where the two stood, battle-ready at the edge of the courtyard.
 "Quick! Get out of her! I've got a plan, but just in case it doesn't work, I need you two safely away from here."

> "No way!" Li retorted. "We're not leaving you to fight this fight alone!"
 "You have to!" Gabor retorted. He saw Catsby start running over to where he stood. "There's no time to explain, just go! Whatever you do, don't turn back!!"

> He engaged Catsby again as the sounds of sword combat rang out through the courtyard, mixing in with the violent roar of the battle once more. Sakura hesitated a second, before following Li out of the castle, soaring over the walls on The Fly.

> "You're a idiot, Gabor!" Catsby shouted in-between swipes, blocks, and thrusts. "You have no idea the life you threw away!"
 "Who's the bigger idiot, the fool who knows God," He retorted, dodging a thrust from her other concealed dagger. "Or the fool who doesn't?"

> "I'll take over this world, with or without you!" She replied, aiming a wide swipe with her sword followed by a jab with her dagger. "Once you're dead, I'll have all the power of the universal mind itself!"
 "What?" He exclaimed, sounding like he wasn't sure he'd heard right.

> "I kill you, and Necros will make me one with the universal mind! I'll be the most evolved creature on the face of the universe! I will *become* a **goddess**!"
 "It's a lie!" He dodged a roundhouse kick. "Necros is using you to destroy me, and when he's done he'll destroy you, too!"

> "Narrowminded fool!"
 Somewhere in the back of his mind, Gabor seemed to remember having this conversation once before.

> "Catsby," He shouted, barely evading a stab to his chest. "There's no universal mind! It's all a lie!"
 "Liar!" She shouted, growing more vicious by the minute. "I'll destroy you and then become the ultimate force in the universe!!"

> Gabor dodged a few more rageful, almost clumsy blows from Catsby, then back flipped high into the air. 'It's now or never.' He thought to himself, seeming to hang in mid-air as everything almost seemed to go in slow motion. 'Lord, guide this Card straight and true, and no matter what happens, let Your will be done.'
 He activated the Card while it was still in his hand. It glowed for just a moment as

he launched it at his opponent, the Card's glow seemed to flash for a second, then...

>
 Sakura and Li had landed on a hill overlooking the castle, watching nervously the fight below. A glint caught Sakura's eye,... no, not a glint, a glow... and suddenly the building exploded forth a massive beam of light towards the sky, the beam easily enveloping the whole castle and the forcewinds of it sending Sakura and Li flying backwards as it hit them like a tidal wave. Pieces of the castle tore apart, sending debris flying in all directions. The brightness consumed Sakura's vision, almost seeming to blind her as Li threw himself over her to shelter her from the flying pieces of stone and rock.

>
 At first all Catsby saw was a white blur, a strange white cloud that surrounded her, but then the light got stronger, more intense, until she felt as if someone had amplified gravity all around her, sending the woman to the ground suddenly. She soon felt not only like she couldn't be seen, but like she was being crushed by the very weight of the air around her. She screamed out in pain and agony, but the light swallowed up her scream, like it had never existed. The light, it was so bright, it burned her eyes even though they were closed. The very air around her seemed to burn with the intensity of the light, and it wasn't even seconds before she herself felt like she was on fire, helplessly being burned by an invisible inferno she couldn't see. She tried to breathe, tried desperately to struggle against the light, but the very air around her seemed to elude her. Was there any air? She soon realized she was no longer able to breathe. She felt like she was drowning and being cremated at the same time. The worst nightmare a person could imagine was exactly what she was now experiencing. A nightmare without end.

> She felt her very skin melt, then felt her insides turn to liquid accompanied by the sound of the pool of blood around her and under her bubbling, boiling. Her mind screamed in a way no human before has ever, not while still alive. She felt her bones begin to melt and saw the liquid of her own marrow mix with the pool of blood that surrounded her. She knew she was no longer alive; no human could have that done to them and live. She waited for darkness to overtake her, waited for the pain and suffering to be put to an end, waited for her being to be seized up by the void.
 But the pain didn't end. True, some of the light around her began to fade, but it didn't simply fade. It was replaced. Replaced by another light. An unsteady light, one that flickered ravenous in the darkness. Flames consumed her field of vision.

> Now, Catsby understood what Hell meant.

>Chapter 9- Destiny

> Sakura's eyes slowly dialed back into focus. Li got off of her, realizing the danger was past, and helped her to her feet. The two of them turned and looked at the remains of the castle, only to see that the castle had been replaced by a massive burn-scarred pit that extended far past the boundaries of where the castle had stood. The light that had seemed to shoot from the castle as far up as the sky's boundaries and maybe farther was now gone, and as far as Sakura could see, nothing remained of the castle. Nothing.
 "Gabor!" Sakura shouted, the silver-clad warrior nowhere to be seen.

> Li put a hand on her shoulder.
 "He's gone." Li stated. Tears welled up in the corner of Sakura's eyes. "I'm sorry; he's gone."

> "... No... no, oh no..." Sakura cried, collapsing to her knees on the ground. Tears streamed from her eyes. A tear rolled down Li's cheek.
 "You risked your life to save us." Li said, speaking into the wind. "I'm sorry, Gabor. I was wrong about you."

>
 Kai had just reached the children in time to see the light

explode from the heavens downward. The sight had startled him greatly, in some ways even brought fear into his heart. He was not an angel who knew fear; he had faced the most evil swarms of dark powers that existed and not once seen fear like he saw then. He heard the echoing screams in his ear, screams imperceptible to humans, but he had heard them. Catsby's screams. The screams that can only be heard when a person without God dies. He knew she had died at the moment the beam of light had touched her. Now he stood, just behind the children, hoping beyond hope that Gabor had somehow survived. Black darkness fled away from the site like a sandstorm, demons fleeing this way and that, and that was only a fraction of the ones who had been in this castle before the light had hit. Kai couldn't see through the seething wave of evil, but as it drew closer, he put his body as a living shield in front of Li and Sakura. The demons flowed around him like water, parting only a few feet from where the mighty angel stood.

> The demon storm dissipated from view as quickly as the light, and Kai turned to see them fleeing into the distance, darkening the sky with their repulsive forms. He turned back to the children and saw that not a single one of the hoard had dared touch them, not even so much as go near them. 'Too preoccupied with their own survival.' He concluded. But why? What had caused this?
 Suddenly, he realized that he recognized the light. He fell to his face, prostrate on the ground.

>
 It all seemed over. The very ground of the castle was the only reminder that Gabor had ever existed, the only testimony that he had saved their lives. Li did his best to comfort Sakura, but it was no use. They both knew he was never coming back.

> Or... did they?
 Suddenly, Li spotted, just barely, movement at the center of the crater. He gasped in sudden surprise, which immediately grabbed Sakura's attention to where Li starred. Again, Li saw movement, and he quickly got to his feet and rushed, falling, down the side of the hill. Sakura took off after him, in her hurry leaving her wand behind as she followed Li down to the crater.

>
 Kai also suddenly saw the movement. A force he couldn't explain had suddenly diverted his attention to the black-scarred crater. He didn't even need to follow Li and Sakura; he already knew the outcome. Gabor was alive.

>
 As Li got closer, he recognized Gabor's form amongst the destruction. He was slowly trying to get to his feet, and to Li's utter astonishment there wasn't even a single singe mark on him, not a single burn or blackened layer of skin. He let out a shout of joy as he and Sakura rushed up to him and helped him slowly to his feet. Gabor was alive.

> "How did you...?" Li's voice trailed off in amazement and relief. Sakura's tears of sadness quickly turned to exasperated relief and joy.
 "Survive?" Gabor finished Li's sentence. He shook his head and sighed. "You're asking the wrong person."

> "But that light, and your Random Card..." Sakura said, voice shaking.
 "As far as I can tell, it wasn't my Random Card." Gabor stated. He held up the Card for all to see. It glowed softly as he held it in his hands. "It still hasn't been put into play or discarded yet. Only a Card ready to be played will glow when I touch it."

> "But then..."
 "What caused the light? I have a pretty good idea..." Gabor stated cryptically. He stood up, locating his seven creature Cards on the ground, picked them up and put them away in his pouch. He sighed, surveying the scene, then turned to Li and Sakura. "C'mon, let's go home."

>
 Several weeks later, Gabor stood high upon the highest rooftop in the city, gazing off into the night. Thinking. Wondering. Pondering. Had he really done everything he could to save Catsby? What if he'd done some things differently, would that have changed the outcome of the battle? He starred into the stars, observing God's handiwork in it's nightly performance around this mass of dirt people had named earth. Things had not gone as bad as they could have, and he was thankful for that,... but still

> The 'what ifs' lingered in his mind, scenarios playing out in his mind's eye. What if he had given in to Catsby? What if he had died at the hands of one of those traps in the castle, never saving Sakura and Li. What if...
 Catsby was dead now, and the Darkcaptor Cards she'd used were destroyed along with her. In a way, he almost felt responsible for her death, even though in his heart he knew he had done everything possible to save her from that fate. Somehow he got the feeling that if she had simply embraced the Truth, that she could have done great things, affected lives, brought people to a personal relationship with Jesus. But instead she had served this world system, and worse. Now she was dead for eternity; what's more, she would be forced to live death for the rest of eternity. If only she had known...

> In the long run, though, it comforted him to know that nothing could get in the way of God's divine plan. Nothing that occurred was outside of the Lord's control, and he knew understood that God had not allowed him to die, and for a reason. That reason was still a mystery to him, but he knew that one day all things would be revealed and he would understand. In the meantime, it was his job to have faith, to continue to trust that God's way was the best way, even when things didn't seem to make sense. He was a single puzzle piece in a puzzle so much larger than himself, and he could only see the pieces that were connected to him directly. Who knows what events may have come about because of all of this that could lead up to major moves of God, perhaps even the fulfilment of prophecy.
 He was a single child in a realm much bigger than himself. Yet, despite his limitations, God had called him to take up his own cross daily, to stand firm in what was right and true, to fight off the powers of darkness with everything he had and everything God had given him. He was truly nothing on his own, but in God's power and provision he stood tall as a warrior of God.

> He had entered a bold new realm, a realm that stretched to the outer limits of the universes, yet a realm he held deep within the depths of his being. He knew that, deep within the hidden chambers of realm was the one force that binds the universe together. He knew that, within the realm, there was a continuous conflict between the agents of Apocalypse, servants and warriors of God, and the forces of the Abyss, agents of darkness and enemies of truth. The conflict existed both outside of him, and deep within him; a mighty struggle for the souls of all mankind and for control of planet earth.

> "Listen, Sakura,..." Li said as the two met the next day outside of school. "I know I was saying a lot of really mean stuff before and,... well,... I just wanted to say I'm sorry. Forgive me?"
 Sakura laughed a friendly laugh and shook Li's hand.

> "Apology accepted. We were both being kind of harsh on each other." Sakura replied.
 "Hey," Tomoyo suddenly nudged her way in-between the two, breaking the handshake. "I think *somebody* owes me an apology, too."

> "OK, Tomoyo. I'm sorry to you to." Li replied, laughter in his voice. Sakura laughed a little bit also.
 "Like Sakura said, apology accepted. I hear you guys had quite an adventure lately; mind telling me about it?" She inquired.

> "Only if you'll tell me where you keep those tapes." Li replied, then started laughing when Tomoyo and Sakura instantly gave him the angry 'I can't believe you' look. "Just kidding! C'mon, we're gonna be late for class."
 "Now *that's* a dangerous adventure!" Sakura laughed as they walked into the school building.

> On a nearby rooftop, a silver cloaked figure smiled down on the trio.

>

>Once again... the disclaimers. Joy of joys. I don't blame you if you don't read these things. Really I don't. Anyway, here they are...

> The Characters I own:
 Gabor, Remnant CARDCAPTOR extreme
> Catsby, the Demon-controlled Darkcaptor
 Seti, the ArchAngel (briefly mentioned)

>

> The concepts I own:
 Remnant Cardcaptors

> Darkcaptors

>
 Cardcaptor concepts I own:

> The Flarewolf
 The Valconair

> The Nightmare
 The Cobra

> The Shine
 The Jolt

> The Predator
 The Plague

> The Sign
 The Deathstrike

> The Deathblow
 The Swarm (briefly mentioned)

> The Blacklight
 The Venom

> The Vicegrip
 The Threshold

>
 Who owns everything else:

> Cardcaptors, Li, Sakura, Kerberus, and Tomoyo are property of Clamp
 Kai, Phalyn (briefly mentioned), Necros, Cameron (briefly mentioned), Dareus (briefly mentioned), and Balera (briefly mentioned) are property of Eternal Studios and ArchAngels: The Saga

>
 If anyone wants to create a sequel to this fic, the only condition is that you send me the sequel before distributing it.

>
 I personally don't know a lot about Cardcaptors, so don't flame me if it turns out Cardcaptors: A Bold New Realm and Cardcaptors: Within the Realm are nothing like the TV show/anime/magna (I never could spell that right), ect...

>
 E-Mail me at Arch-Angels@juno.com

>

> And now for a word from our Sponsor...

> Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. -Zechariah 4:6 <p><p>

End
file.